

NEWS

NYPD’s finest wear badge of honor, courage, commitment

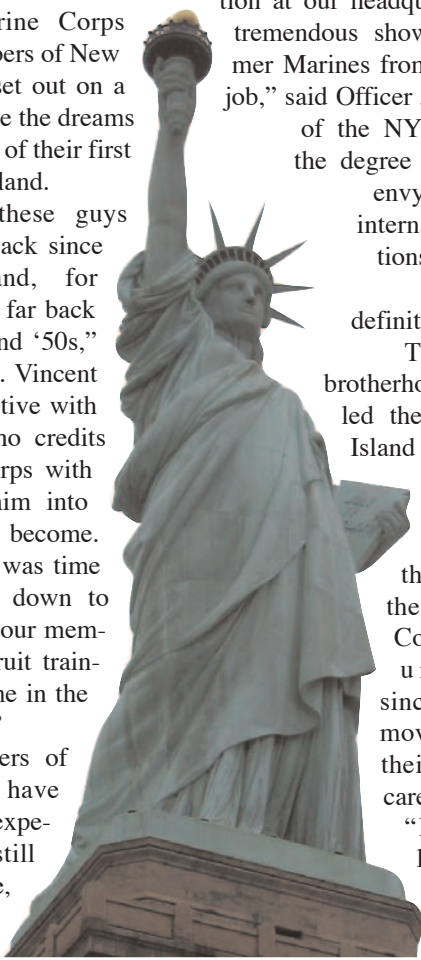
LANCE CPL.
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Heavily laden with Marine Corps memorabilia, tattoos and scars, members of the New York City Police Department Marine Corps Association wear their love for the Corps on their sleeves.

Still walking tall and beaming with Marine Corps pride, 26 members of New York’s finest, set out on a journey to relive the dreams and nightmares of their first trip to Parris Island.

“A lot of these guys haven’t been back since graduation, and, for some, that’s as far back as the 1940s and ‘50s,” said Police Sgt. Vincent Gough, a detective with the NYPD, who credits the Marine Corps with helping turn him into the man he has become. “We figured it was time to come back down to relive some of our memories from recruit training and our time in the Marine Corps.”

Many members of the NYPD have Marine Corps experience and still hold their Eagle, Globe and Anchor close



to their hearts. They formed the NYPD Marine Corps Association in 1993 as a way to keep the Marine Corps brotherhood alive among them. They plan military-themed trips a few times a year to places like Marine Barracks “8th and I,” and they still celebrate the Marine Corps birthday.

“Our yearly birthday celebration at our headquarters has a tremendous showing of former Marines from around the job,” said Officer James Ryder of the NYPD. “It’s to the degree that it’s the envy of the other internal organizations. The brotherhood is definitely there.”

That very brotherhood is what led them to Parris Island again. Their visit allowed them to witness the changes the Marine Corps has undergone since they moved on to their civilian careers.

“Everybody kind of has their own ideas of what they

want to see during the trip ... they all have different expectations,” said Gough, who served four years in the Corps from 1982-1986. “I suppose it just depends on what they remember ... what sticks out in their minds.”

For Gough, who went through recruit training here in 1982, it was nice to view the island from the outside in. He was able to take it all in as a civilian and get a feel for the hard work that goes into creating a properly trained Marine.

“We drove around the base and it really does seem different,” he said. “When I was training here, the island seemed so huge, like it went on for thousands of miles, but seeing all of this has brought back a lot of things. There’s really no one thing I am looking forward to, just watching it all is great.”

During their stay, the men had two-and-a-half days of scheduled events, ranging from museum and squad bay tours to the opportunity to view recruit graduation. But according to one of the members, their first stop will stay fresh in their memories forever.

“I think the highlight of our visit was the receiving barracks,” said Sgt. Robert Maldonado, NYPD. “As we were walking up the block, a couple of drill instructors came out and ‘greeted’ us as if we were recruits



Lance Cpl. Justin J. Shemanski

Jack Feeney, NYPD detective, examines a model in the Korean War exhibit at the Parris Island Museum May 19. Feeney traveled with 25 members of the NYPD Marine Corps Association to visit the Depot for a three-day tour.

getting off the bus. The stressful feeling and all of the yelling was great ... it brought back so many memories. It was a slightly emotional ordeal, it was good ... it felt like we were home, I guess.”

Maldonado, who spent six year in the reserves and was activated for Desert Storm, also said that being able to see the obstacle course and gas cham-

ber were great because those things are “experiences that never leave you.”

The men of the NYPD enjoyed their visit, but, all good things must come to an end. As their recruit training visit drew to a close, it was as if the former Marines would rather reenlist than return to patrolling the streets of New York. Their love of the Corps was still painted on their faces and framed by ear-to-ear smiles.

“It was good to come back and see all the new construction ... all the changes that

have happened here since we left, but the Espirit de Corps, the camaraderie and the discipline is still the same,” said Ryder, who spent four years in the reserves.

Maldonado was also happy to see the progress that the Marine Corps has made since he left and had a message for today’s Marines.

“All the gentlemen down here represent the NYPD, and, as former Marines ourselves, we totally support the Marines and everything they stand for ... we want them to know we are behind them,” he said.